

into the prison gulag in Laos, following unprecedented anti-Communist protests.

The Lao government is holding five of the eleven strong core leadership of the Lao Students for Democracy after it crushed surprise protests in the capital, Vientiane, in October 1999.

Six others, two of whom appeared at a U.S. Congressional forum devoted to their cause, on Wednesday, escaped to Thailand, before being granted political asylum by the United States.

"My colleagues are still in jail, they are asking for peace and justice for the Lao people, I would like them to be put on trial as soon as possible," said one of the leaders, Aly Chantala.

Another dissident leader Nouamkhan Khamphylavong added: "We still heard nothing about their fate since they were arrested."

Rights group Amnesty International has accused the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party of denying that the arrests even took place and of holding prisoners in cruel and degrading conditions.

Campaigners say the five student leaders were arrested, tortured and incarcerated by the Lao government in violation of the country's one year limit on detention without trial.

They want the United States and world financial bodies to withhold financial aid and make trade benefits for Laos conditional on improvements in its human rights record and the granting of political rights.

Some business groups and sectors of the U.S. administration have, however, been pushing for Laos to be granted normal trade relations with the United States, arguing that economic opening will trigger an easing of the political situation.

Wednesday's event in a Congressional building was part of an ongoing campaign to block the aspirations of the pro Laos-trade lobby.

HONORING THE EDUCATIONAL CAREER OF HULON WATSON

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hulon Watson for an outstanding 44-year career in education. He has spent the last 5½ years helping my hometown of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, deal with a population explosion as the school superintendent for Rutherford County. Prior to that post, Hulon served 18 years as the principal of Murfreesboro's Riverdale High School.

But after more than four decades as an educator, Hulon has decided to retire and spend more time with his wife, Charlotte; their two children; and their four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Hulon's last official work day will be December 31 of this year.

Hulon began his career as a teacher and coach in nearby Winchester, Tennessee. After he moved to Murfreesboro in 1979 to take the principal's position at Riverdale High School, he began helping Rutherford County students achieve success. And when he took over the helm of the Rutherford County School System, he helped raise scholastic standards county-wide and guided a vigorous campaign to build much-needed schools.

Hulon did all this during a time when every penny counted. Rutherford County can now

count itself as among one of the best, most efficiently operated school systems in the entire nation. In years to come, Rutherford County residents will be able to see Hulon's legacy through their prosperity. I congratulate him for his efforts and accomplishments in providing Rutherford County children with an education second to none and wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CELEBRATES THE MONMOUTH COUNCIL OF GIRL SCOUTS, INC. 2002 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate the Monmouth Council of Girl Scouts, Inc. 2002 Women of Distinction honorees and their significant contributions to Central New Jersey.

For forty years, through its efforts, the Monmouth Council of Girl Scouts has served tens of thousands of young women across Central New Jersey. This year's women of Distinction honorees exhibit the altruistic ideals that our Nation needs now, more than ever. These ideals, no doubt grew from their involvement in Girl Scouts and the grounding principles of the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law which read as follows:

THE GIRL SCOUT PROMISE

On my honor, I will try, to serve God and my country, to help people at all times, and to live by the Girl Scout Law.

THE GIRL SCOUT LAW

I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do; And to, respect my self and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

The 2002 Women of Distinction Honorees are Carole Robinson for her inspiring Girl Scout spirit, Anna Diaz-White and Paulette Roberts for their professional excellence and Sister Ellen Kelly for her dedication and service to our community. As we celebrate women's History Month, we honor each of these recipients for their hard work and dedication and we celebrate the legacy they have created for women and women's history in Central New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, again, I rise to celebrate, honor and command these outstanding New Jerseyans. I have personally observed the effective work of some of these honorees and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing their invaluable contributions to our community and to New Jersey.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of November being National Adoption Month. Every year, thousands of American families are blessed by

adoption. Whether through domestic or international adoption of children from foster care, the love of compassionate families embraces children of all ages and from every background. During National Adoption Month, we recognize the heartfelt commitment of these good citizens, and we renew our pledge to make adoption a more accessible and positive path for American families.

Children thrive in loving families where they are nurtured, comforted, and protected. We are making important progress in placing children in foster care with adoptive families, and the overall number of children being adopted continues to rise. In the past five years, adoptions have increased dramatically, and thus far in 2002, tens of thousands of children have already been adopted.

In addition, as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Adoption, I have worked to ease the financial burden on adoptive families and to ensure that more children find a caring, permanent home.

But with most adoption costs ranging from \$8,000 to \$20,000 and even upwards of \$30,000, many families can not afford this huge expense. No child should be forced to grow up without a family because of the tremendous cost of adoption.

That's why I am proud that the President signed into law a bill I supported from its inception that provides for an Adoption Tax Credit for those who take this important step into parenthood. As part of the Economic Security and Worker Assistance Act of 2002, this provision will go a long way to making adoption more affordable.

Mr. Speaker, every child deserves a permanent, loving home and, with so many families who want to open their hearts and their homes to these children, this measure will help remove the financial barriers that may hinder this union.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents of the fourth Congressional district of New York, I, Congresswoman CAROLYN MCCARTHY, do hereby commend Nassau County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi, the Nassau County Department of Social Services and the Nassau County's Surrogate's Court for finalizing the adoptions of thirty-two children from foster care.

HONORING VIRGINIA GAINES FOX

HON. ERNIE FLETCHER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, It is an honor to rise today to pay tribute to a trailblazer, a visionary, a dedicated public servant, and a Kentucky original. I speak of the inimitable Virginia Gaines Fox, president and CEO of Kentucky Educational Television, who is retiring next month after 42 years of service in public broadcasting.

Virginia Fox—or Ginni, as she is known by her friends and colleagues—has created a legacy of innovation, public service and the highest standards of excellence. Under her astute leadership, she has built KET into an industry leader. Kentucky Educational Television is the number one provider of adult education in America, providing thousands of broadcast hours of instructional programming to classrooms and hundreds of hours of professional

development resources to Kentucky's K-12 instructors. KET's GED on TV program has helped 11,400 adults in Kentucky—and literally millions more across the country—to earn their high school diploma.

KET is also leading the way in the industry's digital conversion, pioneering datacasting services for Kentucky communities in partnership with Federal, State and local agencies—particularly in the area of public safety, weather alerts, and homeland security. This initiative is serving as a model for similar efforts around the country.

Virginia Fox has been an innovator in distance learning throughout her prestigious career. She was a founding member of the congressionally-created Independent Television Service (ITVS) Board and created the first national ITV satellite schedule, serving more than 23 million students annually with distance learning curricula. She also founded the Satellite Educational Resources Consortium, the first public broadcasting/Department of Education interstate consortium for distance learning.

Virginia Fox's career is highlighted by numerous personal as well as professional accomplishments. She broke the glass ceiling by becoming the first female CEO of a national organization in public broadcasting. She has served on the board of the Public Broadcasting Service and chaired the Public Television Outreach Alliance. She received an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, Morehead State University, and earlier was named Appalachian Woman of the Year by that same institution. This year, she was inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame and received the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Lifetime Achievement Award.

A seventh-generation Kentuckian, Virginia Fox proves once again that the great Commonwealth of Kentucky has an abundance of human resources. It has been my privilege to work with her during my tenure in Congress to ensure that America's children will continue to benefit from the finest educational programming available, and that they will enter formal schooling "Ready to Learn". She has demonstrated the power of television to educate, inform and inspire.

Mr. Speaker, the education of our children is one of our greatest responsibilities. Virginia Gaines Fox must be commended for her innovation, her vision, and her dedication to education. Her leadership will be sorely missed, but her retirement is richly deserved, and we wish her the very best that life has to offer.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE NETWORK

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to let my colleagues know about an important education initiative that is currently under way in western Pennsylvania. This initiative is the School Performance Network, an organization dedicated to disseminating best practices in education to teachers, and to encouraging connections and shared resources among educators.

The School Performance Network today consists of 33 public school districts and 3 di-

ces from 14 different counties in western Pennsylvania. The organization's mission is to "assist schools and districts in the development and use of systems, tools, and practices that help educators improve learning." The SPN attempts to improve educational outcomes through the pursuit of "total performance."

Total performance is a phrase used to describe a philosophy espousing continuous effort to promote greater student learning and achievement. This approach focuses on setting high achievement standards and developing a curriculum that meets them. Total performance seeks to use these standards and performance data to modify teachers' instructional approaches. It also seeks to ensure that teachers and principals take full advantage of available resource like religious and civic organizations—and that they use the available resources strategically to maximize performance improvements. This approach also endeavors to establish a culture that supports collective effort and accountability. Finally, it emphasizes establishing partnerships to enhance and extend student learning opportunities.

The School Performance Network provides schools with access to research that highlights the best teaching methods, as well as to colleagues with similar goals and different experiences. This organization also brokers external partnerships and promotes Cooperative Learning Teams that collaborate across geographic and political boundaries.

The stimulus for this initiative came from the Heinz Endowments. This philanthropic institution recognized that isolation limited the ability of individual schools to improve student achievement. In the course of a 1996 program review of school efforts to promote "total performance," the Endowment's education staff, having made a number of grants to regional schools in order to improve education results, concluded that even greater progress could be made by promoting communication among these schools. The Endowment provided funding in 1998 to develop plans for establishing such a network. Subsequently, in early 2000, a pilot program consisting of 8 school districts was undertaken. Later that year, the pilot program was successfully concluded and the School Performance Network began expanding its membership.

I want to commend the Heinz Endowment for its vision in establishing the School Performance Network. I want to commend Dr. Mary Catherine Conroy Hayden for her leadership of the School Performance Network. And I want to thank the School Performance Network and its many partners for their efforts to improve the quality of education in this country.

Mr. Speaker, this regional collaborative effort holds tremendous potential for implementing education reform nation-wide. I urge my colleagues to explore the possibility of establishing similar efforts in their own communities.

HONORING FORMER PRESIDENT
JORGE QUIROGA RAMIREZ OF
THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I, along with the co-chairmen of the Speaker's Task Force for a Drug Free America, want to recognize Jorge Quiroga Ramirez, former President of the Republic of Bolivia, for his years of steadfast support, commitment and leadership in the fight against illegal drugs.

Most of us first met Jorge Quiroga in the early days of the Administration of former President Hugo Banzer, when he served as Vice President of Bolivia. He came to Washington early on in his tenure to seek U.S. support and backing for Bolivia's "Dignity Plan"—a five year strategy to remove Bolivia from the international narcotics circuit. At the time he assumed office in August of 1997, Bolivia was the world's second largest producer of cocaine with nearly 113,000 acres of coca under cultivation.

The Dignity Plan that was presented to the U.S. Administration and the Congress was the product of a well-conceived political strategy designed to build domestic consensus within Bolivia against the drug trade. Late in 1997, civic, religious, labor, indigenous, private sector and political leaders met together under the leadership of then-Vice President Quiroga, in what was called the National Dialogue, a series of discussions and consensus-building meetings around four pillars: Opportunity (economic issues), Equity (social development), Integrity (institutional strengthening) and Dignity (fight against drugs). This last pillar, focused on how to move Bolivia out of the international drug trade circuit by 2002.

As a result, the Dignity Plan began its implementation by the end of 1997, with ambitious goals centered on four areas: Interdiction, Eradication, Alternative Development and Prevention.

We in Congress have occasionally heard foreign leaders make eloquent statements about their plans to reduce drug cultivation and work with the U.S. to end this scourge—plans that ultimately were not successful. Bolivia proved how such a program can be truly successful.

There were two things about the Dignity Plan that we found appealing. First, it was the product of an extensive discussion within Bolivian civil society, seeking to eliminate the drug trafficking stereotype for which this Andean country was known. Second, we found in Vice President Quiroga an honest and sincere individual whose commitment to Bolivia's future as a drug free country mirrored our own commitments here at home. Vice President Quiroga was precisely the kind of straight-talking, action-oriented leader that we believed was required to take real and meaningful action. A great many of us signed on to the Dignity Plan and did our best to provide political and financial support.

Over the past five years, as Vice President of Bolivia and later as President, Jorge Quiroga implemented the Dignity Plan with stunning success. This past August, President Quiroga turned over the Office to his democratically elected successor, the Honorable